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ABSTRACT

An 18-item survey was distributed to 308 faculty members at Tennessee Technological University to elicit information about the kinds of writing students are expected to do in courses both inside and outside the English department, the relative importance of writing in various courses, and the specific expectations faculty members have concerning writing. Responses were received from 47% of the faculty members. Their responses indicated that in most introductory courses writing was limited to short-answer exam responses. Short documented-research papers were likely to be required of upper level students' papers. Most respondents indicated that part of the student's grade was determined by written work, and the majority considered outlines to be part of the preliminary process of writing, but not part of the final product. Most required subheadings and other divisions in formal writing, but few assigned a specific grade percentage to correctness, and many overlooked minor writing flaws in work written under the pressure of a time limit. Poor spelling, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences were perceived as serious problems in writing. The kinds of writing done within each discipline was surveyed to enable the English department to plan specialized writing courses. Many indicated a need for students to learn library research techniques, and most felt the students did not write well enough to suit them. (A copy of the questionnaire is appended.) (HOD)

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A Cross-Disciplinary Survey of Writing Expectations

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A Cross-Disciplinary Survey of Writing Expectations

The concept of writing across the curriculum has been with us for several years now. Harvey Weiner tells us that "One of the most substantial early efforts to extend writing across the curriculum was under Dean Harriet Sheridan of Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota" in 1974.[1] In Errors and Expectations (1977), Mina Shaughnessy writes "Ways ought to be found to increase students' involvement with writing across the curriculum. This does not mean persuading more teachers in other subjects to require term papers but making writing a more integral part of the learning process in all courses."[2] Also in 1977, George C. Klinger reported in CCC of a survey he developed to study how English and non-English department faculty evaluated the same "hypothetical student essay" in an effort to learn if there is validity to the claim "You must learn your English because professors in other courses demand correct writing."[3] The Spring/Summer 1980 Journal of Basic Writing, the February 1980 CCC, and the April 1981 Forum for Liberal Education all contain articles which provide background about the concept of writing across the curriculum and describe specific programs at a number of institutions, large and small, public and private. These articles and others like them tell us why writing across the curriculum programs are educationally valuable to our students and how those of us in English Departments can help our colleagues in other disciplines integrate the teaching of writing and the teaching of chemistry, math, philosophy, home economics or whatever. We find ourselves often cast in the role of sage, bringing light to our colleagues

who come to us seeking the answers to their students' writing problems. And the research in writing which has taken place over the last fifteen years or so makes it possible for us to give some useful, valid answers about how people write and how they can learn to write more effectively. But there is a hitch: it's possible for us to give answers, good answers, before we know all the facts which produced the questions--before we know, that is, what our colleagues value in a piece of writing, what they perceive as the writing problems of their students.

While I have long been curious about what students write and what faculty members outside of the English department expect of writing and have been aware that even English teachers often evaluate writing in composition courses differently than they do writing in literature courses, the specific question of what really matters in writing was suggested to me in a paper I heard at the 1980 CCCC. In a paper entitled "The Phenomenology of Error," (subsequently published in CCC 32 (May, 1981) 152-68) Joseph Williams suggested that different readers react negatively to different features in writing. To some readers, split infinitives or sentence-ending prepositions are glaring errors; to others, they are minor annoyances; to still others, such features are ignored or not even noticed. If Professor Williams is correct, and his argument is persuasive, then it is likely that some, if not much, of what English teachers perceive as errors might not be so perceived by other readers and that readers who are not English teachers may consider good student writing to differ from good student writing in composition courses.

To address this hypothesis, I developed a survey (Appendix A) to gather information about writing from members of the faculty at Tennessee Technological University where I taught from 1979-1981. I distributed the survey to the 308 faculty members at Tech, and after about a month received responses from 47% of them (If you've ever sent out a survey and waited for responses--or if you've ever received a survey which you somehow didn't manage to return--you'll know that a 47% response is better than ordinary).

The 18-item survey is designed to elicit several kinds of information. Questions 2 and 3 provide data about the kinds of writing students are expected to do in other courses, answers to question 4 suggest the relative importance of writing in various courses, and questions 5-13 ask about specific expectations faculty members have. The value of this information to English faculty is that it allows us to avoid making false assumptions about what and how much students will write in other courses. We might, for example, want to decrease our emphasis on composition as an academic survival skill if we learn from questions 2-4 that students rarely are requested to write more than a few lines in other courses and that this writing has a negligible effect on their grades. Our focus might change to teaching writing as a means of discovering what we know and what we think rather as a way of revealing what we have learned. Questions 5-9 would help us better prepare students for research papers and formal reports in other disciplines, for if we know what formats are expected, we can present them to students. Question 13 provides information which can help us shape our writing assignments. For example, we should not over-emphasize impromptu in-class essays if we learn that students are

never asked to produce them once they leave the composition class.

Question 14 is more closely related to Professor Williams' questions about error, for the responses it elicits will tell us what other readers consider serious and typical weaknesses in their students' writing. We may learn, for example, that no one outside the English department considers pronoun-antecedent agreement errors or fragments to be errors, but many consider poor organization and overly-complex language to be writing weaknesses. In such a case, we may wish to examine a number of options: should we change the emphasis of composition classes to reflect what our colleagues consider important, should we continue as we are doing under the assumption that pronoun-antecedent and fragment errors are not problems because we teach students to avoid or correct them, or should we begin a dialogue with our colleagues to develop a more specific criteria for teaching and evaluating writing across the curriculum?

The latter, I believe, is the most desirable direction to take for a number of reasons. In the first place, we in the English department avoid academic insularity. We learn to teach writing not simply on the basis of what composition texts or handbooks suggest, but on a more realistic understanding of the kinds of discourse students will be called upon to write in other classes and, as questions 15, 17, and 18 suggest, in their professions. Thus our courses become, to use an out-of-fashion word, relevant to our students. In addition, we remain credible to our colleagues, who may otherwise suspect that our writing courses are literary criticism under an assumed name. Furthermore, such inter-disciplinary efforts to improve the teaching of writing allow faculty members to discover ways to make writing part of the educational

process by introducing appropriate writing assignments in more courses, by helping faculty in other disciplines gain competence and confidence as evaluators and teachers of writing, and by enabling students to see writing as a part of first learning and then communicating what they have learned.

I'd like now to turn to the responses to the survey, to discuss them briefly, and to suggest their implications for those of us who teach writing.

Questions 1-3:

Nearly all of the respondents indicate that students write in their courses. Students do little extended writing in 100-level courses outside the English department; instead, in most introductory courses, writing is limited to short-answer exam responses. Later in their education, students in many disciplines, ranging from Agriculture to Chemistry to Home Economics, are likely to be required to write short documented research papers. Since the English Department at Tennessee Tech stopped teaching the research paper several years ago, this information may prove significant in future curriculum decisions.

Question 4:

While it's probable that many of the faculty members who did not respond to this survey do not require much writing in their courses (a notion supported by the fact that only 14% of the Math/Computer Science faculty, 25% of the Accounting, Agriculture, and Elementary Education faculties responded), most of those who did respond indicate that part of the student's grade is

determined by written work. Some departments, like Chemistry and Engineering and Business, report that writing may count very little in some courses, 0-2%, but nearly all departments indicate that in other courses, written work may account for 100% of the grade. One obvious pattern shows that as students move into 300-, 400-, and graduate-level courses, written work becomes more important as teachers require fewer objective tests and more papers and reports. Students who expect that once they enter upper-division courses in science, engineering, or business they will be working with figures, not words, are only partly correct. On the average, respondents indicated that 42% of a student's grade may depend upon written work.

Questions 5-9:

Those of us who teach courses which involve research papers and documentation forms may benefit from knowing that the twenty-two departments or programs which were surveyed listed twenty different handbooks or style sheets, including two guides developed by individual departments. Some of our texts mention that different disciplines require different documentation formats, a few composition texts give examples of APA or another form, but most of our texts and many of us teach the MLA form as if it were the only acceptable way to document. At the very least, we need to urge our students to always ask their instructor what the appropriate style sheet for a particular course or discipline is. Our colleagues in Geology would be no more pleased to receive MLA documentation presented by a student who insists

"But that's the way my English teacher said to do it" than we would be to receive work documented according to the United States Geological Survey's Suggestions to Authors. Using appropriate documentation is ultimately a rhetorical matter, part of a writer's awareness of and consideration for an audience who expects formal reports to be documented according to conventions which it understands. Further, other than the English department, the only unit at TTU in which even some respondents require outlines to be submitted is the College of Business (50% require outlines). The majority of the respondents consider outlines part of the preliminary processes of writing, not part of the final product, so those of us who require the submission of formal, parallel, appropriately numbered and lettered outlines might want to explain to our students that most readers aren't at all interested. And we might want to consider teaching other prewriting techniques in place of or in addition to the outline. Responses to these questions about the format of written work also indicate that most disciplines require sub-headings and other divisions in formal writing. The departments of English, History, and Political Science are the exceptions. This suggests that composition teachers may want to include instruction in the proper use of subheadings in their courses.

Questions 10-12:

While most instructors take writing correctness into account in evaluating written work, few faculty assign correctness a specific grade percentage, and many will overlook minor writing flaws in

work written under the pressure of a time limit. Of the various departments and disciplines other than English at TTU, the natural sciences and business are more likely to lower a grade if the work is poorly written and, along with Foreign Languages, are least willing to overlook poor writing even in time-pressure situations.

Question 13:

I mentioned earlier that one thing we could learn from this survey is whether the kinds of assignments we make are similar to those made by other instructors. The responses to this question reveal simple, but significant information: Students can expect over half of their written work to be due one week or more after it is assigned. There is relatively little writing done within one class period or from one period to the next, suggesting that while students should be given some instruction on how to handle essay exam questions, more attention should be given to teaching students to use their writing time productively by encouraging them to plan, write, revise, and edit their work instead of trying to write papers the night before they are due.

The most complex data comes from a stastistical analysis of responses to question fourteen. Before turning to this analysis, however, I must point out an ambiguity in the question which two of the respondents to the survey detected and which may or may not have created difficulty for other respondents. It is possible for some respondents to have emphasized the typicality of an error in ranking its seriousness; that is, to have ranked errors which occur most frequently

as most serious. In any further work I do with this survey, I will change question fourteen to read "Please rank the following writing problems by seriousness. Circle the letter of those problems which are typical of your students' writing."

I have computed two sets of means for this data: the mean response for each discipline, department, or college for all items in question fourteen, and the mean response per item across disciplines.

MEAN RESPONSE BY DISCIPLINE, DEPARTMENT, OR COLLEGE:

Agriculture: 2.70

Education: 2.72

Home Economics: 2.74

Business: 2.82

Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences: 2.94

Ed. Psychology: 3.00

Engineering: 3.10

Music Education: 3.17

Sociology and Philosophy: 3.19

Math, Computer Sciences, and Physics: 3.39

History and Political Science: 3.54

Foreign Languages: 3.83

English: 4.01

Aside from confirming some stereotypes (the low means for agriculture and the higher means for the traditional humanities, for example), what do these figures suggest? To answer this question, we need to look at the overall mean for the university, which is 3.16, and the standard deviation of .40. In a normal distribution, we know that

68% of whatever we're measuring will fall within plus or minus one s.d. and that 96% will fall within plus or minus two s.d. from the mean. We see that eight of the thirteen disciplines are within one standard deviation of the mean. The distribution for this data indicates that three departments, Agriculture, Home Economics, and Education, fall slightly more than one standard deviation below the mean (1.15, 1.10, and 1.05 s.d. respectively) and that one department, Foreign Languages, falls 1.42 standard deviations above the mean. The English department's mean of 4.01 is 2.13 standard deviations above the mean. One clear implication is that the English department considers <u>any</u> weakness serious, even things which many other faculty members consider minor or simply annoying. This is at once good and bad. Seen in the best light, this suggests that the English department is interested in assessing writing critically and in encouraging students not only to write clearly and meaningfully, but also to conform to grammatical and mechanical conventions. On the other hand, this high mean suggests an error-consciousness which far surpasses that of readers in other disciplines. The comparison of the English department's means with those of other departments and disciplines affirms what Professor Williams implies--that one reader's serious error is another reader's minor annoyance. The lower means for other departments suggests that readers who are not charged with the responsibility of teaching writing are more tolerant (or less aware) of errors.

To verify this supposition and to learn which features offend readers most, we now turn to the mean response per item of question 14.

a.	3.55	j.	3.51
b.	3.02	k.	3.73

c.	3.07	l.	3.71
d.	3.01	m.	3.67
e.	2.89	n.	3.11
f.	3.03	o.	2.90
g.	3.16	p.	3.57
h.	1.96	q.	3.29
i.	2.53		

Here, the overall mean is 3.16; the standard deviation .44. The comparatively high scores given items k, l, m (the only items with means more than one standard deviation above the mean), and p indicate the importance of coherent, specific, developed writing. These are the areas our colleagues perceive as most serious. Item a, spelling, receives a predictably high score given the visibility of spelling errors and the obvious rightness or wrongness of spelling. Knowing this enables us to urge students who have difficulty with spelling to make an extra effort to edit their work to correct the spelling, not because it has anything to do with their intelligence, but because incorrect spelling annoys readers and interferes with communication. Fragments and run-on sentences, item j, are also perceived as fairly serious errors, perhaps because fragments and run-ons interfere with coherence and clarity, perhaps because they are, like spelling, highly visible. Diction matters, such as overly-complex language (item h) and informal language and slang (item i), are rated as the least serious problems, both with means more than one standard deviation below the mean. This is an interesting finding, for it is possible, I think, to interpret these results to mean that academic readers want complex language and

thus overly-complex language is not a problem, and that in addition, informal language is a slightly more serious problem, suggesting that readers are less willing to tolerate informality than complexity. To those of us who agree that jargon, inflated language, over-generalizations, and abstractions plague the style of bureaucrats, corporate voices, and professionals writing for one another, this preference for complexity over informality may come as no surprise, but may help explain the turgid prose which seems to confront us everywhere.

Question 15, concerning the kinds of writing done by professionals in the various disciplines surveyed, turned up results which underline the value of our awareness of what others write. Seven of the disciplines indicate that professionals are likely to do all of the kinds of writing tasks listed; five indicate that all but one task applies; only one left several blanks for this question (that one was foreign languages. Although all but one blank was checked by at least one person in the English department, most respondents from English indicated that they perceive people in our discipline to write what one might expect: letters, memos, articles, papers, abstracts, and reviews.). This kind of information can help us plan specialized courses, as many departments already have in technical and business writing, to give students experience in the kinds of writing they will actually have to do. Here, especially, we have the opportunity to create truly interdisciplinary writing courses, for we can benefit from the specialized knowledge of our colleagues in other disciplines as they can benefit from our familiarity with the writing process, style, and similar matters.

Appendix B lists representative responses to questions 17 and 18.

Responses to these questions varied from no response at all to several single-spaced typed pages, from admonitions to "teach them to spell, damn it!" to expressions of sympathy, to statements of support, to something bordering on praise. If any consensus exists, it's the unsurprising one that our students do not write well enough to suit their teachers. These questions, I think, and the survey as a whole open up a dialogue with our colleagues. As the response from the faculty member in Educational Psychology suggests, we make our presence known. What we gain from these questions is information about what others perceive us as doing well and what they would like to see us begin to do. In the particular case of Tennessee Tech repeated concern for basic skills work might serve as a justification for securing funds for a developmental writing course, which currently does not exist. That many respondents indicated a need for students to learn library research techniques follows logically from the answers to item 3, which indicated that most students are required to do a library paper, and supports the need to reintroduce the library paper to the freshman composition curriculum. Once those of us in the English department know what our colleagues want, we are in a better position to ask them to help us teach writing by working with us to develop assignments for our courses and theirs, to require more writing from their students, and to emphasize the importance of the writing they require.

Although it would be possible to describe responses to individual questions in more detail, more important than whatever generalizations can be made from this survey of the faculty at one university are the questions raised by this kind of research for those interested in interdisciplinary writing programs or writing across the curriculum.

First, as writing teachers, we need to assess our roles as the university's semi-official protectors of language purity. To what extent do we perceive ourselves or wish to be perceived as primarily responsible for students' spelling and grammar? To what extent should our attitudes be shaped by those of readers outside the English department? If overly-complex language is not perceived to be a problem for other readers, should we concern ourselves with it? If teachers who will grade students' writing are quite concerned with spelling, should we make spelling a major criterion of our own evaluation of writing? To what extent can or should we attempt to introduce teachers in other disciplines to theories and research about composition? Should our interest and knowledge of the writing process influence their evaluations of written products? Can we responsibly teach writing without concern for the expectations of those we know will read our students' writing? Second, to what extent can we work with faculty members from other disciplines to enable them to integrate appropriate writing assignments into their courses? What can we offer them as suggestions for making writing a part of every student's education in every course? If we know the kinds of writing assignments made in courses, we should be able to offer suggestions to our colleagues about the way those assignments can be made to encourage good writing as well as good science or accounting or anthropology. We should be able to introduce our colleagues to holistic grading techniques which allow for detailed, yet relatively quick evaluations of written work. We should be able to offer ourselves as guest lecturers or team teachers who can come into a class to discuss strategies for approaching a written assignment in a psychology or home economics course. We should welcome

the advice of our colleagues who know far better than we do what kinds of writing a professional accountant, electrical engineer, medical technologist, or chemist is likely to do. Our knowledge of what our students will write in school and in their professions makes our job as writing teachers easier to do. Though our students may not immediately begin to write better, they will begin to see that we have reasons grounded in knowledge for what we expect them to do. We will no longer be, as we all too often are in their eyes, people who make them work hard for low grades on something irrelevant to their educations and their careers, but instead will be offering them skills which will help them be more successful at both.

Appendix A

Respondent's Department: _____

1. Must students write in any of the courses you teach? Yes____ No____
   If your response is yes, please continue with the remaining questions. If your response is no, please indicate the conditions which make writing assignments impractical in your courses (for example, class size, nature of course material). You may skip questions 2-14.

2. Do you require writing in 100-level courses? Yes____ No____
   200-level courses? Yes____ No____
   300-level courses? Yes____ No____
   400-level courses? Yes____ No____
   Graduate courses? Yes____ No____

3. Which of the following best describe the writing assignments your students must complete? (You may check more than one.)

   100-level:
   a. short answer exam responses of 1-5 sentences? ____
   b. several paragraph-length exam responses? ____
   c. responses to essay questions? ____
   d. book reports? ____
   e. short documented research papers (7-12 pages)? ____
   f. longer documented research papers? ____
   g. lab reports? ____
   h. reports of original research? ____
   i. other (please specify) ____

   200-level: a.__ b.__ c.__ d.__ e.__ f.__ g.__ h.__ i.__
   300-level: a.__ b.__ c.__ d.__ e.__ f.__ g.__ h.__ i.__
   400-level: a.__ b.__ c.__ d.__ e.__ f.__ g.__ h.__ i.__
   Graduate: a.__ b.__ c.__ d.__ e.__ f.__ g.__ h.__ i.__

4. Approximately what percent of the student's grade is determined by these writing assignments?

   100-level ____%
   200-level ____%
   300-level ____%
   400-level ____%
   Graduate ____%

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5. Do you expect students to follow a specific format for organizing formal reports? Yes____ No____

6. Do you expect students to follow a specific form of documentation common to your discipline? Yes____ No____

7. Is there a handbook or style sheet which outlines the appropriate report format and documentation forms for your discipline? Yes____ No____
If so, what is it? _____

8. Do you require students to include outlines with formal writing assignments? Yes____ No____

9. Does the format for your discipline or which you require use headings and sub-headings to identify sections of the paper? Yes____ No____

10. Do you generally take writing correctness and ability into account when grading student work? Yes____ No____

11. Does writing correctness count for a specific percentage of the grade of an exam or paper? Yes____ No____
If so, what percentage? _____%

12. In evaluating writing done under the pressure of a time limit (an exam, for example), are you willing to overlook poor writing if the student indicates knowledge of course content? Yes____ No____

13. Approximately how much time do students have to complete most writing assignments you give?

a. one class period _____
b. from one class to the next _____
c. one week _____
d. half of the quarter _____
e. all quarter _____

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14. Which of the following are typical weaknesses you detect in your students' writing? Please rank by seriousness: 1-not a problem, 2-acceptable, minor weakness, 3-annoying, but tolerable, 4-serious, 5-very serious

a. spelling____
b. punctuation____
c. subject-verb agreement (The books was not in the library.) _____
d. agreement of pronoun and antecedent (Each student is responsible for their own work.) _____
e. Use of non-standard English (double negatives: It doesn't have no purpose. verb endings: He has work hard.) _____
f. ambiguous word choice____
g. incorrect word____
h. overly-complex language_____
i. informal language, slang____
j. fragments, run-on sentences_____
k. incoherent sentences_____
l. unclear or undeveloped purpose or main idea____
m. inadequate development or support of main idea____
n. lack of details____
o. lack of examples____
p. poor organization____
q. over-generalization or simplification of concepts____
r. other (please specify)_____ _____ _____

15. Indicate the kinds of writing tasks a professional in your discipline is likely to face frequently.

a. correspondence____
b. memoranda____
c. grant proposals____
d. feasibility studies____
e. impact statements_____
f. progress or status reports____
g. lab reports____
h. conference papers____
i. prospectuses____
j. articles for professional journals____
k. proposals____
l. abstracts and/or summaries____
m. reports of original research____
n. financial reports, budgets, etc.____
o. other (please specify)____

16. List two or three essential journals for your discipline.

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17. Briefly indicate the kinds of writing experience and instruction which would benefit students in your discipline.

18. If you wish, please make additional comments about the writing needs of your students, the role of writing in your discipline, etc.

Appendix B:
Sample Responses to Questions 17 and 18

Question 17:

Grammar! Spelling! Many of them have very basic weaknesses in these areas, as well as in sentence structure and the development of paragraphs. (Home Economics)

Reduce instructors' (in English) loads. Have more themes with rewriting until the theme is of good quality. Don't just hand it back with a score on it. Tell the student where his/her problem is and to re-do it. (Biology)

Most of the students taking freshman chemistry at this university need a course in basic grammar and sentence structure. To be blunt, the students cannot write. (Chemistry)

Report writing; writing letters. Use up-to-date reference systems. The system presently taught is as cumbersome and useless as rollerskates in a swimming pool. More grammar; less literature. (Earth Sciences)

Students in scientific and technical disciplines need to be able to express themselves in an accurate and complete, yet concise, manner. (Physics)

1. Technical papers for the experts. 2. Technical papers for the non-expert in subfields of the same discipline. 3. Scientific papers readable by non-scientists. 4. General compositions which would have indelible impressions on the readers. (Physics)

Nuts and bolts grammar. Two years of Latin. Vocabulary development and composition. (Economics and Finance)

Students need to understand how to express their ideas as simply and coherently as possible. In addition, they need to understand that writing is both a means of articulating ideas more clearly and a means of commmunicating ideas to other people. Many students fail to use writing to help them define their ideas--the value of rewriting is rarely appreciated. I find that students tend to write the first thing down that comes into their minds and rarely reread it to determine if the idea is clear and if that is the best way to express it. (Educational Psychology)

They need instruction on two levels. First, they desperately need instruction in the rudiments of grammar/syntax. They also need practice in procuring information from a library, organizing it into a technical paper or report, and writing the paper or report in a coherent, readable form. (Civil Engineering)

Extremely brief, concise reports of personal observations, requiring the student to limit observations to the most important facts and to state those facts in the most precise form possible. (Nursing)

Question 18:

For major reports (over one-half quarter allowed for completion), I would like to have someone in English to correct the grammar first. If this could be arranged, a portion of the report's grade could be tied in. Presently, because of time pressure, I correct for content and very little of the grammar. This would be a real service to the students. (Home Economics)

Especially in research papers, organization is a major problem. Students tend to allow their research data to guide their writing, rather than using analysis to construct an appropriately constructed paper. (History)

What other single talent could be more important, apart from the ability to read? (Physics)

Each student, no matter, what his discipline is, should acquire reasonable competence in writing before leaving college. This is extremely important not only for writing effective papers and proposals, but also for improving communications with the society. (Physics)

Good writing is critical! (Economics/Finance)

I did not think English professors really were concerned about these matters. Seems to be a great disparity between freshman composition classes and what we require in standard scientific writing. (Educational Psychology)

Musicians tend to be nonverbal due to the nature of the art. Those who plan to teach in the public schools need to develop the ability to communicate more adequately in written and verbal form. (Music Education)

It appears that rather than enabling students to develop self-confidence at written expression, we somehow scare them to death of it. . . . some effort should be made to develop in students a more positive attitude toward any and most assignments which require them to write. (Special Education)

The ability to communicate with both written and spoken English is an essential requirement for successful engineers. In particular, they should be able to present complex technical thoughts and ideas in simple, concise terms to non-technical oriented persons. (Civil Engineering)

In nursing it is extremely important for students to be able to express themselves clearly and accurately in writing. Spelling and grammar are important, too. (Nursing)